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THE

SUN WORSHIPERS

OF

ASIA.

BY

CHARLES D. POSTON.

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INTRODUCTION.

The materials for the preparation of the following Lecture were collected during an official visit to India, China, Japan, etc., accredited by the Government of the United States.

Personal intercourse with the Parsees, particularly in India, excited a lively interest in the religion and history of the followers of the ancient Zoroaster.

In submitting these crude observations, made upon a subject far beyond my capacity, the concluding paragraph of a circular letter issued by His Excellency, the late Earl of Mayo, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, recommending the writer and his secretary, Colonel Grant, is appended as a grateful tribute to the memory of that eminent representative of Her Majesty's Government in India.

"It is the particular desire of His Excel-
"lency, the Viceroy and Governor-General in
"Council, that all respect and honor be shown
"to these gentlemen who are on the eve of
"starting for Upper India, and that every fa-
"cility be afforded them in their inquiries at
"any stations or places where they may stop.

"His Excellency in Council will rely upon
"everything being done to show to these repre-
"sentatives of a great and friendly power the
"high estimation in which it is held by the
"British Government in the East."

THE PARSEES.

THE SUN WORSHIPERS.

In the crowded cities of Asia the soul becomes surfeited by contact with myriads of human beings and longs for companionship with nature.

If you wander to the beach at sunset to inhale the breezes from the Spice Islands, you will there observe a congregation of the most interesting people in Asia.

They are the Parsees, or sun-worshipers of Persia, the followers of the ancient Zoroaster, the teacher of the religion of the Magi.

As we stand upon the shore, and witness the adoration paid to the sun by this mysterious remnant of a nearly extinct race, we are carried back to the dawn — aye, to the darkness, for

but little light can be gathered from the faint glimmerings of history.

The Magi first appeared in Jerusalem as a part of the retinue of Nebuchadnezzar, from which it may be inferred that they were the chief priests at the Babylonian Court.

Their religious doctrines are compiled in a sacred volume called the *Zend-Avesta*, of which Zoroaster is the reputed author, claiming to have written it under the direct inspiration of God.

THE "ZEND-AVESTA."

He does not presume to say that the Creator of the Universe condescended to appear before him, but that he learnt His will "from the "choir of arch-angels, who sang to his mental "ears when in a state of ecstacy; his mind "was raised to heaven."

The *Zend-Avesta* does not attempt to give any account of the creation.

The idea pervading the Parsee theology from the first is, that "eternity," or "boundless time,"

has neither beginning nor end, and is the only thing that can neither be created nor destroyed, but is that which creates and destroys everything else; therefore, time is considered as the great first cause or creator.

They believe that originally there were two spirits,—good and evil,—typified by light and darkness, each of peculiar activity.

That Oromasdez (Almighty), the Good Spirit, was evolved from the purest light, and is in all his attributes what we call God, and resides as far beyond the sun as the sun is distant from the earth.

That Ariemanios, the bad spirit, corresponding to our Devil, was evolved from the blackest darkness, is the embodiment of evil, and resides in Hades.

That these two spirits are now, and always have been, engaged in antagonistic strife, and will be at war until light prevails.

Oromasdez (Almighty), the God of light, created six other gods or archangels, whose attributes are —

Benevolence.	Truth.	Order.
Wisdom.	Beauty.	Wealth.

Ariemanios, the god of darkness, created six gods or devils of precisely opposite attributes, to counteract them.

They created many other gods, and waged war against each other, — the sentiment underlying the whole fabric of the Parsee doctrine being, that human life is an eternal struggle between right and wrong, in which the good and evil spirits assist and assail mankind.

Dualism pervades the entire structure. There are two lives, mental and physical; there are two intellects, one from the source of light, or the original vital spark; the other of the earth, or that which is acquired.

In this eternal strife the starry firmament was arrayed under the leadership of the sun.

Twelve companies were organized under the heads of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, ranged in four great divisions, North, South, East, and West. Mars was placed over the North; Mer-

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cury was placed over the South; Jupiter was placed over the East; Saturn was placed over the West. Venus commanded the centre. Oromasdez now continued the creation of the material world, making a bridge from the top of the highest mountain to the source of light, suspended over a chasm of unfathomable darkness.

This bridge is called "Chinvat," or the Bridge of the Judge, and is under the guardianship of Sirius.

In the meantime the spirit of darkness had not been idle. For every good being created by Oromasdez, he had created a corresponding evil spirit.

The two hosts now confronted each other in eternal strife.

Ariemanios sprang forward to the attack, followed by the hosts of darkness; but, after a terrible conflict, was defeated, and fell back to earth in the form of a serpent — that same old serpent.

Oromasdez, thus having vanquished the spirit

of darkness, proceeded with the creation of the material world, and made a man and a woman to inhabit the earth.

The serpent tempted them and they drank of the milk of goats, which caused libidinous desires and final shame.

The human race, which thus became miserable by the sin of its first parents, was left standing between the two worlds of light and darkness, between the two spirits of good and evil, dependent upon its own free will.

As the creatures of the spirit of light, they ought to worship Oromasdez; but they are continually surrounded by the spirits of darkness, and seduced to the worship of the spirit of evil.

In this dilemma the God of Light sends them Zoroaster with a revelation of His will, which to obey will lead them to the mansions of light and to eternal happiness.

ZOROASTER.

The earliest authorities we have upon the age of Zoroaster are the Greek writers.

All the Greek authors who wrote on the religion of the Magi, anterior to the Christian era, state that Zoroaster lived 6,000 years, B.C. According to ancient writers, the founder of the religion of the Magi lived not only before Moses, but even before Abraham.

Herodotus, the father of history, says :—

"I know that the Persians observe these "customs. It is not customary among them "to have idols made, temples built, and altars "erected; they even upbraid those with folly "who do so. They are accustomed to bring "sacrifices to Zeus on the summits of moun- "tains. They sacrifice to the sun, moon, earth, "fire, winds, and waters; these elements being "originally the only objects of worship."

Aristotle states that "Zoroaster lived about "6,000 years before the death of Plato, which "would make it about 6350 years B. C."

Pliny reports, upon the authority of Hermippos, a Greek philosopher, "that he lived "several thousand years before Moses, and that "he composed two millions of verses, which

"were written upon twelve thousand parchments, "and preserved in a vault cut out of the solid "rock in the temple of Persepolis."

Marcellus, a Latin writer states :—

"That the Bactrian Zoroaster in remote ages "made many additions to the religion of the "Magi, which additions were derived from the "mysteries of the Chaldeans."

Apuleius states that "Pythagoras was taken "prisoner by Cambyses, and carried with other "prisoners to Babylon, where, in his intercourse "with the Magi, he was instructed by the "priests in the Zoroastrian religion."

Strabo, the geographer, says :—

"To whatever deity the Persians make sac- "rifice, they first invoke fire, which is fed at "their sacred places with dry pieces of bark- "less wood, which is never to be extinguished."

Agathias says :—

"The present Persians almost entirely neglect "their former customs, and observe the doctrine "of Zoroaster, the son of Oromasdez."

"The time when this Zoroaster flourished

"and gave his laws to the Medes and Persians "is not to be ascertained. At whatever time "it may have been, he was at all events their "prophet and the master of the magic rites."

Damâscius, a Grecian writer, says :—"Of the "Magi and Aryan nation some consider space "and others time, as the universal cause out "of which the good God, as well as the Evil "Spirit, were separated, while others assert, that "light and darkness, existed before these two "spirits arose."

Agonakes, a Magian priest, who was teacher of Hermippos, states that "Zoroaster lived 5,000 "years before the Trojan war, which would "carry us back to 6180 B. C."

Rollin says :—"As the Magi held images in "utter abhorrence, they worshipped God only "under the form of fire, on account of its "purity, brightness, activity, subtlety, fecundity, "and incorruptibility, as the most perfect sym- "bol of the Deity."

The "Dabistan," a book professedly compiled from the works of the ancient "Guebers," or

"fire worshipers," states that the Persians, long before the mission of Zoroaster, venerated a prophet called Mahabad, whom they considered the father of mankind; but that the ancient Persians deemed it impossible to ascertain who were the first parents of the human race.

In any event, without contesting the uncertain chronological calculations which have been handed down to us through many changes, we must admit that Zoroaster lived at a very remote period, and that he was the founder of a pure and sublime religion based upon the eternal principles of right and wrong, good and evil, light and darkness, and that he was far in advance of any teacher of which human annals have preserved a record.

The religion of Zoroaster may be stated in three words:—

"Homuté," purity of thought.
"Hookté," purity of speech.
"Virusté," purity of action.

Before Moses proclaimed the bloody code

delivered to him amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai for the government of the wandering Israelites, the great Zoroaster had promulgated the sublime laws announced to him by the "Bright shining essence of light" for the government of mankind.

He says to his disciples:—"I will now tell "you, who are assembled here, the wise sayings "of the most wise; the praises of the living "God; the songs of the Good Spirit; the "sublime truth which I see arising out of these "sacred flames.

"In the beginning were two spirits, each of "peculiar activity—good and evil. Of these "two spirits you must choose one; you cannot "belong to both of them.

"Therefore perform the commandments which, "pronounced by God Himself, have been given "to mankind. They are the fountain of hap-"piness.

"The souls of the good go joyfully to the "immortal saints, to the golden throne, to para-"dise.

"The good man is made pure after death."

Centuries before Plato reasoned of the immortality of the soul, the great Zoroaster had drawn the celestial fire from the sun, and worshiped it as the emblem of immortality.

Long before the Pharisees and the Sadducees had desecrated the holy city of the Jews with their disputes about the resurrection of the body, the Magi believed according to the text—

"That life would be everlasting, undecaying, "imperishable, imputrescible, incorruptible, for-"ever-existing, for-ever-vigorous, full of power at "the time when the dead will arise again, and "imperishableness of life will exist, making life "lasting without further support.

"The good man is to be made pure after "death, and shall enjoy the happy life of the "blessed in the land of light and splendor.

"All the world will remain for eternity in a "state of purity; the devil will disappear, and "all his brood and creatures will be doomed "to destruction."

Ages before the Testament was given, which

caused Saint Paul to reason of "temperance, righteousness, and a judgment to come," Zoroaster had declared as a revelation from God—

"That when a man is dead, when a man "has departed this life, then after the third "night, when Aurora is shining, he reaches "Mithra the Redeemer, rising above the moun-"tains resplendent of their own spotless lustre.

"The archangel meets the souls of the good "when crossing the celestial mountain, and guides "them over the bridge of the heavenly spirits.

"The archangel speaks thus to the soul, "'How happy that you have come here to us "'from mortality to immortality.'

"He dismisses the sinful soul of the bad "into darkness."

The spiritual life of the Jews was not manifested until after the Babylonian captivity.

They brought their *bodies* from the Nile, but their *souls* from the Euphrates.

The very prophecy of the coming of the Messiah had the same origin as the star which heralded His birth.

The spirit of Christianity, inspired from the East, was cradled upon the shores of the Mediterranean, and now spreads over all seas and all lands.

In a sacred song of the Parsees, the purport is, that though it may not appear to short-sighted mortals how the body, if once dissolved into its elements and scattered to the winds, could be restored again, yet nothing is impossible for the hand of the Almighty who created heaven and earth, endows with life and renews vegetation.

The Parsees also believe in the coming of the Messiah or prophet, a son of Zoroaster, to be begotten in a supernatural way, who is to proclaim an additional revelation of the will of God, which will perfect human nature, and produce a new era of perfect happiness in the world.

The doctrine taught by the Magi was that all life, chiefly that of man, bodily as well as spiritual, was a sacred pawn entrusted by the Creator to man for his advancement; that it

was his duty to keep the body clean and pure, and the soul free from sin.

If death destroys the body in its natural course, it is not the fault of man, who must submit to inexorable fate; but it is considered the duty of God, who is the preserver of all life, to restore that which has fallen a prey to mortal death, and to overcome mortality by making life everlasting in the bright world.

Thus is foreshadowed the grand act of resurrection.

CATECHISM.

A Catechism of the Parsee faith has been attached to the Zend-Avesta for the instruction of children, which gives a primitive account of the Zoroastrian doctrines, from which a few extracts may not prove uninteresting:—

QUES. Whom do we believe in?

ANS. The God who created the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the angels, the four elements, and all things; that God we believe in, Him we worship, Him we invoke, Him we adore.

QUES. Do you believe in any other God?

ANS. No. Who believes in any other God is an infidel, and shall suffer the punishment of hell.

QUES. What is the form of our God?

ANS. Our God has neither face nor form, color nor shape, nor fixed place. There is no other like Him; He is Himself singly, such a glory that we cannot praise nor describe Him, nor can our mind comprehend Him.

QUES. Is there anything that God cannot create?

ANS. Yes, he cannot create another like himself.

QUES. What is our religion?

ANS. Our religion is the worship of God.

QUES. Whence did we receive our religion?

ANS. From Zoroaster, the true prophet, who brought it directly from God.

QUES. Where should we turn when worshiping God?

ANS. We should turn towards some of his creatures of light, of glory, and of brightness.

QUES. Which are those things?

Ans. The sun, the moon, the stars, fire, water, and such things as have a spark of His glory.

Ques. What commands has God sent us through the exalted Zoroaster?

Ans. To know God as One; to know His prophet Zoroaster; to believe in the Avesta; to believe in the goodness of God; to obey His commands; to avoid evil deeds; to exert for good deeds; to pray five times a day; to believe in the reckoning of justice the third day after death; to hope for heaven, and to fear hell; to believe in a day of general resurrection and destruction; to submit to the will of God.

Ques. If we commit any sin, will our prophet save us?

Ans. Never commit any sin under that faith, because our prophet—our guide to the right path—has distinctly commanded, "You shall receive according to what you do." Your deeds will determine your return into the other world. If you do virtuous and pious actions, your

reward shall be heaven. If you sin, and do wicked things, you shall be punished in hell.

If you repent your sins and reform, and if the Great Judge consider you worthy of pardon, He will be merciful to you,—He will save you.

QUES. What are those things by which a man is blessed and benefited?

ANS. To do virtuous deeds; to give in charity, to be kind, to be humble, to speak sweet words, to wish good to others, to have a clean heart, to acquire learning, to speak the truth, to suppress anger, to be patient, to be contented, to be friendly, to feel shame, to pay due respect to both old and young, to be pious, to respect our parents and teachers.

All these things are the friends of good men, and the enemies of bad men.

QUES. What are those things by which a man is lost and degraded?

ANS. To tell untruths, to steal, to gamble, to look with wicked eye upon a woman, to commit treachery, to abuse, to be angry, to

wish ill to another, to be proud, to mock, to be idle, to slander, to be avaricious, to be disrespectful, to be shameless, to be hot-tempered, to take another's property, to be revengeful, to be unclean, to be obstinate, to be envious, to do harm to any man, to be superstitious, to do any other wicked and iniquitous action.

These are all the friends of the wicked, and the enemies of the righteous.

PRAYER.

The Parsees believe in the efficacy of prayer, and spend much time in devotion.

An impression of their religious sentiments can be gathered from the forms of prayer in use, such as the following:—

"Oromasdez, great Judge, full of glory and "brightness, the highest, the greatest, the best, "the purest — Invisible — I worship Thee, I "invoke Thee, I adore Thee.

"By my deeds I honor and exalt Thee.

"Creator of my soul.

"Moulder of my body, may I reach Thee.

"O great and wise Lord, the reward that is "due to the religious may I and mine receive. "That reward mayest Thou give from the stores "of Thy bounty in such a way in this and the "spiritual world, that I may be exalted and "may live for ever and ever under Thy holy "leadership and virtuous protection.

"If I have by thought, word or deed inten- "tionally or unintentionally not kept Thy com- "mands, and thereby saddened Thee, I invoke "Thee, I pray Thee, I beseech Thee, for pardon.

"May all men and women in the world "become Thy followers.—May sinners become "virtuous.

"May the virtue of the virtuous endure, and "may wickedness vanish.

"I am of the religion of the worship of "God.

"I praise that religion, and declare it before "the wicked, and profess it with good con- "science, with virtuous words, and virtuous "deeds.

"Whoever accepts this religion, praises it,

"meditates upon it, and practices it, God will "be a friend a brother, and a father, and will "pass him over the bridge of Chinvat, on the "third morning after death, to the celestial "world

"I invoke the success and benefit of prayer "—a virtuous conscience, good deeds, good "words.

"I love prayer, for it is a joy to me; O "Oromasdez, I worship Thee on earth, and in "heaven I will worship Thee much!"

OTHER RELIGIONS

In the cycle of time the faithful worshipers of the sun have witnessed the rise and reign of Buddha, and have seen his ashes scattered from the seven-storied pagoda of his typical heaven, without wavering in their devotion to the God of Light.

They have seen Brahma rise and grow mighty, and thunder over the plains of Asia in his car of Juggernaut, and have witnessed his calcined remains swept by the sacred Ganges into the

sea; and yet they scorned the idolatries of Hindustan, and worshipped the God of light and life.

Their wandering traders carried the perfumes of the East to embalm the Egyptian kings before Abraham visited the pyramids; but they were not seduced by the idolatries of the Egyptians, and turned from the worship of Isis and Osiris to prostrate themselves before the embodiment of all goodness—the source of light, of life, of happiness.

They discard the doctrines of Confucius as the material philosophy of a man who did not know God; and turn from the inanimate creed of the Chinese sage to worship the God of light, or life, of generation, of vegetation.

They have read the essays of the grave Laotsze, teaching the religion of reason, and proclaiming that there was no other God worthy of worship; but the faithful Parsee turns to his living, breathing, vitalizing deity, and proclaims his own to be the most reasonable worship.

Their "Wise Men" followed the star which

the shepherds descried upon the Chaldean plains, until it rested over the village of Bethlehem, and were the first to make "offerings of gold, and myrrh, and frankincense," at the cradle of the Saviour, as the oriental tributes to royalty and divinity, and to fall down and worship Him as the Christ!*

The sun worshipers have witnessed the rise of the impostor of Mecca, and were crushed under the iron heel of his Moslem hordes because they would not abjure their ancient faith, and worship an invisible God, and an infamous Prophet; but in the changes of time, the crescent wanes like a dying moon, whilst the God of the Parsees rides in undimmed splendor, the source of light, of life, and of existence.

The following division of the human race has been made according to religion:—

---

* And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.—Matt. ii., verse 11.

Buddhists	31.2	per cent.
Christians	30.7	"
Mahommedans	15.7	"
Brahmins	13.4	"
Heathens	8.7	"
Jews	0.3	"
Parsees	0.01	"

HISTORY.

At the time of the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great, the sun worshipers were crushed under the heel of the devastator of Asia. Their temples were destroyed, their books burnt, and their religion suppressed.

The conquerer of the world sat upon the throne of the great Cyrus, drunk with Persian wine and inflamed with the love of the beautiful Thais,

> " Who sat by his side,
> " Like a blooming Eastern bride,"

and persuaded him to dim the lustre of his conquest by burning Persepolis, with all its stores of art and learning.

A thousand years later in the annals of time, the Moslem hosts overran Persia like a sirocco, and another desolation spread over the followers of Zoroaster.

Such as would not embrace the faith of the conquerors, either fled to the mountains or betook themselves to the more desolate plains.

"Never was Iran doomed to bend
"Beneath a yoke of deadlier weight.
"Her throne had fallen, her pride was crushed,
"Her sons were willing slaves, nor blushed
"In their own land, no more their own,
"To crouch beneath a stranger's throne.
"Her towers where Mithra once had burned
"To Moslem shrines, oh shame! were turned,
"Where slaves, converted by the sword,
"Their mean apostate worship poured,
"And cursed the faith their sires adored."

In the course of half a century after the Mahommedan conquest, a large proportion of the followers of Zoroaster had sought refuge in the island of Ormuz, in the Persian Gulf.

Here they remained about a quarter of a century, when they removed to Gujerat, in India.

Since the conquest of India by the British Government, they have been esteemed the most faithful, the most intelligent, and the most enterprising subjects of the Indian Empire.

Their principal residence is now the city of Bombay, where they number at least one hundred thousand souls.

They have not been slow to gather the

"Wealth of Ormuz and of Ind,
"Where the gorgeous East with richest hand
"Showers on her kings barbaric pearls and gold."

THE DESERT.

The scattered remnants of the Parsee tribes have kept up a communication by means of annual caravans, exchanging the pearls of the Sea of Oman and the gems of India for the silks and shawls of Persia and Cashmere.

In the long exile which they have endured, many branches of the family of Zoroaster have become apostates from the religion of their fathers, and have fallen into the Pantheistic worship of the Hindus.

The preparations for the march of a caravan commence in the early dawn, before the burning sun begins to play upon the exposed earth.

The camels kneel for their burthens, complaining all the while in a gutteral grunt peculiar to the patient and enduring "ship of the desert."

The burthens are adjusted, and the drivers mount the beasts, and stretch out upon the trackless waste.

The sun rises from his oriental couch, and wooingly kisses the dew drops from the face of his fair bride the earth.

The caravan presses on amidst the silence of the desert, their busy feet rustling the sand as the tinkling bells vibrate upon the stillness of the desert air.

Invisible bells are ringing in the ears of the drivers and the men, and the apostate Parsee hears the bells ringing for the followers of Zoroaster to assemble for worship in the "fire temples" around the sacred altar; and he sees a pillar of fire shining before him on a hillock of sand, and in the lap of the wave of the desert he

sees the bright waters of his boyhood invitingly shining. But these are the illusions of the desert—the bells are the vibrations of the desert air, the pillar of fire the sun's reflection, and the valley of water the deceptive mirage.

The sun rides in mid-heaven at noonday glaring upon the earth like an angry God.

The clouds have disappeared before his gaze, the sky is brass, the earth is iron, the sun is a ball of molten copper.

The snakes have crawled into their holes in the sand, the panting lizards seek the shade of a leafless shrub, the solitary hyena scours the desert, scratching the sand to cool his blistered feet.

The sun rides in solemn majesty, saying to the apostate Parsee—

"I am the God of your fathers; fall down and worship me or die."

On the trackless deserts of Asia the sun calcines the brain; the parched lips crack with the intense heat; the tongue swells and impedes respiration; the glowing eyes turn to

heaven for pity, but close in death under the piercing rays of the angry sun.

The riderless camels huddle together in despair, and, moaning a requiem over their stricken masters, bury their heads from the fury of the sun in the sands of the desert.

The hot air escapes from the parched earth to the serene atmosphere of heaven, and the vacuum is filled by the dreadful simoon, which comes thundering over the desert in a tornado of sand.

The sirocco eddies around the lost caravan, and covers it from the pitiless rays of the sun.

The merciful clouds shed a flood of tears upon the mound, moistening the seeds of a few date palms, causing them to fructify and grow a grove of stately palm trees, under which pious sun worshipers stop on their journeys from India to Persia, and relate to their young men the fate of the caravan which refused to worship the God of their fathers, the God of the desert. Long may the palm grove shade the remains of the perished caravan!

The palm tree is the nursling of the sun, and in many lands, it is the only living thing between earth and heaven.

Stately and beautiful, its branches are outspread to the sun imploring mercy.

Placid and calm in the mellow moonlight, it is inlaid upon the sky.

Blessed be the peaceful palm tree!

BIRTH.

A Parsee must be born upon the ground floor of the house, as the teachings of their religion require life to be commenced in humility, and by good actions alone can an elevated position be attained either in this world or the next.

The mother is not seen by any member of the family for forty days.

Upon the seventh day after the birth of the child, pen, paper and ink are placed within the prohibited enclosure, in order that the goddess "Chhatti" may write out the destiny of the child.

If the goddess should not appear, it is possible that the mother may amuse her convalescence by writing out such a career for her new-born babe as she would desire. This paper is preserved in the family archives as a guidance and encouragement to the child through life, and may exert some influence in shaping its destiny.

At the age of seven years or thereabouts, according to the judgment of the priest, the first religious ceremony of the Parsees is performed upon the young Zoroastrian.

He is first subjected to the process of purification, which consists of an ablution with "nirang."

The ceremony consists in investing the young Parsee with the cincture, or girdle of his faith. This cincture is a cord woven by the women of the priestly class only. It is composed of seventy-two threads, representing the seventy-two chapters of the *Zend-Avesta*, in the sacredness of which the young neophyte is figuratively bound.

The priest ties the sacred cord around the waist as he pronounces the benediction upon the child, throwing upon its head at each sentence slices of fruits, seeds, perfumes and spices.

He is thus received into the religion of Zoroaster.

After the performance of this ceremony, the child is considered morally accountable for its acts.

If a child should die before the performance of this ceremony, it is considered to have gone back to the spirit which gave it, as pure as it entered into this world, not having reached the age of accountability.

The ceremony of "Kusti," or encircling with the girdle, is closed by the distribution of refreshments to the friends and relatives of the family who have attended the investiture of the young follower of Zoroaster with the sacred girdle of his faith.

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MARRIAGE.

Early marriages are customary in Asia.

The betrothal of young Parsees frequently occurs directly after they are born—in some instances before.

The wedding day is fixed by an astrologer, who consults the stars for a happy period of conjunction for the young adventurers upon the matrimonial sea.

The wedding day being fixed, a Parsee priest goes from house to house with a list of the guests to be invited, and delivers the invitations with much ceremony.

The father of the bride waits upon near relations and distinguished personages, soliciting the honor of their attendance.

A little before sunset a procession is formed at the house of the bridegroom, and proceeds with a band of music, amid great pomp and ceremony to the house of the bride's father.

At the house of the bride's father, a number of relatives and friends are collected at

the door to receive the bridegroom with due honor.

Presents are sent before, according to the time-honored customs of the East.

Upon the arrival of the procession at the house of the bride, the gentlemen gallantly remain outside, leaving room for the ladies to enter the house with the bridegroom, as his escort.

As he passes the threshold, his future mother-in-law meets him with a tray filled with fruits and rice, which she strews at his feet.

The fathers of the young couple are seated side by side, and between them stands the priest ready to perform the magic ceremony.

The young couple are seated on two chairs opposite each other, their right hands tied together by a silken chord, which is gradually wound around them as the ceremony progresses, the bride in the meantime being concealed with a veil of silk or muslin, such as covered the face of Rebecca until she became the wife of Isaac.

The priest lights a lamp of incense, and repeats the following ceremony in the old Persian language :—

" Know ye, that both of you have loved " each other, therefore you are united as man " and wife.

" Look not with impious eye upon other " people, but make it your study to love, honor, " and cherish each other as long as you both " remain in this world.

" May quarrels never arise between you, and " may your love for each other increase day " by day as long as you live.

" May you both learn to adhere to the truth, " and be always pure in your thoughts, words, " and deeds, and always try to please the Al- " mighty, the lover of truth and righteousness. " Shun evil company, abstain from avarice, " envy, pride, idleness; cultivate friendship, be " charitable; respect your parents above all others. " May success crown your efforts; may you be " blessed with children; may you exalt the re-

" ligion of Zoroaster; may the blessing of heaven " descend upon you."

At the conclusion of the ceremony they each throw upon the other some grains of rice, and the most expeditious in performing this feat is considered to have got the start of the other in the future control of the household, and receives the applause of the male or female part of the congregation, as the case may be.

The priest now throws some grains of rice upon the heads of the married pair in token of wishing them abundance; and bouquets of flowers are handed to the assembled guests, and rose-water is showered upon their heads.

The bride and bridegroom now break some sweetmeats, and, after having served each other, the company are invited to partake of refreshments.

At the termination of this feast the procession forms, and, with lanterns and music, escorts the bridegroom back to his own house, where they feast until midnight.

As midnight approaches they return to the

house of the bride, and escort her, with her dowry, to the house of the bridegroom, and, having delivered her safely to her future lord and master, disperse to their respective homes.

Eight days after the bridal ceremony a wedding feast is given by the newly married couple, to which only near relations and particular friends are invited.

This feast is composed entirely of vegetables, but wine is not forbidden; and at each course the wine is served, and some of the guests propose a toast, as

"Glory to God."
"Happiness to the young couple."
"Abundance and fruitfulness."

DEATH.

The funeral ceremonies of the Parsees are solemn and imposing.

When the Divine Essence receives back into its bosom the vital spark which has animated a human body, the relations and friends of the

deceased are naturally drawn nearer to the source of life.

When the medical attendant declares the case of a Parsee hopeless, and announces that the immortal spirit is about leaving the body, the priest advances to the bed of the dying man, and says :—

" May the Almighty pardon you for anything " you may have done against His will, His " commandments, and the dictates of the true " religion of Zoroaster.

" May the Merciful God give you a good " and happy abode in the world which you are " about to enter, and have mercy upon your " soul."

After the spirit has departed from the body, a funeral sermon is delivered by the priest, in which the inanimate clay before them is made the subject of an exhortation to the relatives and friends of the deceased to live pure, holy, and righteous lives, so that they may hope, by the mercy of the Almighty, to be allowed to

cross the bridge of Chinvat, and meet in Paradise.

The body is taken to the ground floor where it was born, and, after being washed and perfumed, is dressed in clean white clothes and laid upon an iron bier.

A dog (the most faithful companion of man) is then brought in to take a last look at its inanimate master.

This may be considered by us a superstition, but it is an essential part of the Parsee funeral ceremony.

A number of priests attend and read prayers from the holy books of their religion for the repose of the soul of the departed Parsee.

All the male friends of the deceased go to the door, bow down and raise their two hands, from touching the floor to their heads, indicative of their deepest respect for the departed. The body, after being put upon the bier, is covered over from head to foot. Two attendants bring it out of the house, holding it low in their hands, and deliver it to four pall-

bearers outside; the attendants at the bier, as well as the pall-bearers, being clad in well-washed, clean, white, but old clothes.

All the people present stand up as the body is taken out of the house, and bow to it in respect as it passes by.

A procession is now formed by the friends of the deceased, headed by a number of priests in full dress, to follow the body to the dokhma, or "temple of silence," the last resting-place of the departed Parsee.

These "temples of silence" are towers, which may be seen on the beautiful hills around the harbor of Bombay, and wherever else this mysterious race remain.

They are constructed of stone, and rise some twenty-five feet high, with a small door at the side for the entrance of the body.

Upon arriving at the "temple of silence," the bier is laid down, and prayers are again said. The attendants then raise the body to its final resting-place, lay it upon its stony bed, and retire.

A round pit about six feet deep is surrounded by an annular stone pavement about seven feet wide, on which the bodies are placed.

This pit has communication with gutters, through which the rain washes out the liquid of the dead bodies into subterranean pits prepared for their reception.

The remains of the human body are distributed to the four elements of which it is composed :

Earth to earth.
Air to air.
Water to water.
Fire to fire.

The worms of the earth shall not consume the forms that were loved and cherished in life : the sun warmed them into existence, the sun shall receive their vital essence.

From the sun thou comest—to the sun thou goest—child of the sun.

On the third day after death, an assemblage of the relatives and friends of the deceased

takes place at his late residence, and thence proceed to the "temple of fire."

The priests stand before the urns in which the celestial fire is kept burning, and recite prayers for the soul of the departed.

The son or adopted son of the deceased kneels before the high priest, and promises due performance of all the religious duties and obsequies to the dead.

The relatives and friends then hand the priest a list of the contributions and charities which have been subscribed in memory of the deceased, which concludes the ceremony of "rising from mourning," or "the ressurrection of the dead."

On each successive anniversary of the death of a Parsee, funeral ceremonies are performed in his memory.

An iron framework is erected in the house, in which shrubs are planted and flowers cultivated to bloom in memory of the departed.

Before the frame, on iron stands, are placed

copper or silver vases, filled with water and covered with flowers.

Prayers are said before these iron frames two or three times a day.

These observances are called "Mooctads," or ceremonies of departed souls.

COSTUMES.

The every day life of the Parsee may be interesting to those who are not familiar with Oriental customs.

On getting out of bed in the morning, an orthodox Parsee first says his prayers. He then rubs a little "nirang" upon his hands, face, and feet, reciting during the ceremony a prayer or incantation against the influence of devas or evil spirits, for which the "nirang" is considered a specific. He next takes his bath, cleans his teeth, and repeats his prayers. He then takes his morning meal, consisting of tea or chocolate, fruits and bread,—a light repast, which fits him for the duties of the day.

His costume is loose and flowing, very pic-

turesque in appearance, and admirably adapted to the climate in which he lives.

The sudra, or shirt, which is considered the most sacred garment, because it is worn next the skin, is a plain loose vest, usually made of muslin, or with the opulent of fine white linen.

A long coat or gown is worn over the sudra, extending to the knees, and fastened around the waist with the kusti, or sacred cord, which is carried around three times, and fastened in front with a double knot.

The pyjamis, or loose trowsers, are fastened around the waist by a silken cord with tassels at the ends, which are run through a hem. The material of these pyjamis, among the common classes, is cotton, but the rich indulge in fancy colored silks and satins.

The head is covered with a turban, or cap, of a fashion peculiar to the Parsees: it is made of stiff material, something like the European hat, without any rim, and has an angle from the top of the forehead backwards.

The color is chocolate or maroon, except with the priests, who wear a white turban.

It would not be respectful to uncover in presence of an equal nor even of a superior.

The shoes are of red or yellow morocco, turned up at the toes.

The dress of a Parsee lady is something gorgeous. They are enveloped in a maze of mysteriously wound silk, far beyond my power of description.

They appear as houris floating about the earth in silk baloons, with a ballasting of anklets, necklaces, earrings, and jewelry, intended, as may be the case with many other finely dressed ladies, to bind them to the earth.

The dressmakers' bills, fortunately for the head of the family, are not exorbitant, as their costumes have not been through the hands of the *modiste*, but are composed of many yards of fancy-colored silks wound round the nether limbs and gradually enfolding the body, covering part of the bosom, and are then thrown over the shoulders and head, drooping on the

left arm, as a shield against the inquisitive gaze of a stranger.

The pyjamis, or drawers, are common to both sexes, but the ladies, of course, excel in the fine texture and fanciful colors of these picturesque coverings of their fair extremities.

CUSTOMS.

The men are well formed, active, handsome and intelligent. They have light olive complexions, a fine aquiline nose, bright black eyes, a well-turned chin, heavy arched eyebrows, thick sensual lips, and usually wear a light curling moustache.

The women are delicate in frame, with small hands and feet, fair complexions, beautiful black eyes, finely arched eyebrows, and a luxuriant profusion of long black hair, which they dress to perfection, and ornament with pearls and gems.

The Parsees are much more liberal in their treatment of females than any other Asiatic race; they allow them to appear freely in pub-

lic, and leave them the entire management of household affairs.

They are proverbial for their benevolence, hospitality and sociability. They are apt scholars, and usually learn several languages. The Gujerati, Hindustani, and English are necessary to their business.

The Parsees are notoriously fond of good living, and do not hesitate to spend their money freely for the best the market affords.

They indulge in wines, but do not reach the vice of intoxication.

Their first meal, according to the customs of the East, is a light breakfast, say, tea, bread and fruits.

The dinner is more abundant, and is composed of the dishes of the country—meats, stews, vegetables, rice, fruits, etc.

These dishes are seasoned with pungent sauces, curries, chutneys, pickles, etc., etc., one of which, famous in Bombay, is marked with the mild initials H. F. (hell-fire.)

The evening meal is taken after sunset, when

the labors and ceremonies of the day are over, and is the signal for license in eating, drinking and conversation.

A "tat" or parting drink for the night is the time-honored custom among the Parsees as well as the Western nations.

THE SACRED FIRE.

The antiquity of sun worship mocks history. It flourished in Japan at the remotest period of Japanese tradition, and to-day a red sun upon a white shield is the national banner of the Japanese empire.

The city of Baal, or Baal-bec, is the grandest ruin which the sun worshipers have left upon the earth.

The monuments are so great that Oriental nations will not believe that they were erected by human hands, but attribute them to the genii, who they believe were coerced to the Titanic labor by the talismanic seal of King Solomon.

An eminent writer says:—"If all the ruins

" of ancient Rome were gathered together in " one group, they would not equal in extent " the ruins of Baal-bec."

" Baal-bec, thou city of the sun,
Why art thou silent, mighty one."

Heliopolis in Egypt was also a city of the sun. The obelisk erected 3600 years ago, stands upon the ruined temples of the sun worshipers.

In the western hemisphere the glory of his brightness was heralded from the golden temples of the Incas of Peru to the téocállis of the Pima Indians.

The sacred fire of the Parsees, drawn from the sun by Zoroaster has been preserved with care throughout all their vicissitudes.

It is always kept burning in their temples, representing the essence of nature, the divine spark of immortality, the fluid pervading the whole earth—electricity—the cause of all growth, vigor, and splendor.

Therefore it is regarded with much reverence by the Parsees.

In religious processions, or in time of war, the sacred fire is carried on silver altars surrounded by the Magi singing hymns, and followed by three hundred and sixty-five youths clad in scarlet, representing the days of the year.

When the crescent triumphed over the sun at Náhávand, the faithful sun worshipers carried the sacred fire into the mountains of Khorásán, where they concealed themselves in caves, and continued to keep the sacred fire burning, and to worship the God it represents.

"The orb that with surpassing glory crowned,
"Looks from his sole dominion like a God
"Of that new world, at whose sight all the stars
"Veil their diminished heads."

The sun worshipers were well known to the ancient Israelites, who had frequent intercourse with them.

Moses first ordered the destruction of the sun temples.—Deut. chap. xii.

Ezekiel warned the Jews against falling into the idolatries of the Persians in worshiping the sun.—Ezek. chap. viii. v. 16, 17.

Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, was highly esteemed by the sacred writers, and was lauded by them as an instrument in the hands of God to subdue the heathens.

He was called "the Eagle from the Orient" (as the eagle was the ensign of the ancient Persians); "the annointed of the Lord;" "the shepherd who carries out the Lord's decrees." —Isaiah chap. xlv. v. 1.

YEZDIJIRD.

The last stand made by the Parsees for empire, for religion, and for fatherland, was near Ecbatana, where there is a cenotaph to Ahásuéras, and his Hebrew wife, the beautiful Esther.

The Persian army at the battle mustered 150,000 men, commanded by Thiránzin, and fought under the eye of King Yezdijird.

The Moslem force was gathered by the Caliph Omar, and fought under command of Norman Ben Makrán Mazanni.

The followers of Mahomet, shouting "Alla

Akbar," charged the Persian host with irresistible fury, and the sun went down upon the broken and scattered ranks of its worshipers. When it rose again, the Persian kingdom, claiming to be coeval with the sun, had ceased to exist.

The Parsees compute time from the fall of Yezdijird, which makes this (1877, A. D.) the year 1246.

Their calendar is divided into twelve months of thirty days each (the other five days being added for holy days, are not counted).

Each day in the year is named after some particular angel of bliss, under whose especial protection it is passed.

On feast days a division of five watches is made under the protection of five different divinities.

In midwinter a feast of six days is held in commemoration of the six periods of creation.

About the 21st of March (the vernal equinox) a festival is held in honor of agriculture, when planting begins.

In the middle of April a feast is held to celebrate the creation of trees, shrubbery, and flowers.

On the fourth day of the sixth month, a feast is held in honor of Shahrevar, the deity presiding over mountains and mines.

On the sixteenth day of the seventh month a feast is held in honor of "Mithra," the deity presiding over and directing the course of the sun.

Also a festival to celebrate truth and friendship.

On the tenth day of the eighth month a festival is held in honor of Farvardin, the deity who presides over the departed souls of men.

This day is especially set apart for the performance of ceremonies for the dead.

The people attend on the hills where the "Temples of Silence" are situated, and there perform prayers for the departed souls.

The Parsees are enjoined by their religion to preserve the memory of the dead by annual religious ceremonies performed in the house;

but such of their friends as die on long voyages, or in unknown places, and the date of whose death cannot be known, are honored by sacred rites on this day.

The Parsee scriptures require the last ten days of the year to be spent in doing deeds of charity, and in prayers of thankfulness to God.

On the day of Yezdijird, or new year's day, the Parsees emulate the western world in rejoicing and social intercourse.

They rise early, and after having performed their prayers and ablutions, dress themselves in a new suit of clothes, and sally forth to the "fire temples," to worship the emblem of their divinity—the sacred fire, which is perpetually burning on the altar.

Unless they duly perform this ceremony, they believe their souls will not be allowed to pass the bridge of "Chinvat," leading to heaven.

After they have performed their religious services, they visit their relations and friends, when

the ceremony of "Hamijur," or joining of hands, is performed.

This ceremony is a kind of greeting by which they wish each other "a happy new year."

Their relations and friends are invited to dinner, and they spend the balance of the day in feasting and rejoicing; alms are given to the poor, and new suits of clothes are presented to servants and dependents.

The ancient Persians possessed a profound knowledge of astronomy.

They did not speak of "the four corners of the earth," as the Jews did, but compared the universe to a chariot drawn by four horses, continually in motion.

They believed in the revolution of the earth before the land was raised from the sea upon which Galileo was born.

The sun was worshiped as the symbol of divinity under the name of Baal, or Moloch.

The moon was worshiped as the Queen of Heaven, under the name of Astarte, or Astaroth.

The firmament was mapped and a catalogue of over one thousand stars was made before the Christian era.

The Parsees claim the ancient order of Freemasonry, with all its customs, ceremonies, hieroglyphics, and chronology, as an offshoot from the religion of the Magi.

They have several flourishing Masonic Lodges in Bombay, and are received in fellowship by the Masonic Lodges in England and France.

Their religion teaches them benevolence as the first principle, and no people practice it with more liberality. A beggar among the Parsees is unknown, and would be a scandal to the society.

In the city of Bombay alone they have thirty-two different charitable institutions.

The sagacity, activity, and commercial enterprise of the Parsees are proverbial in the East, and their credit as merchants is almost unlimited.

They frequently control the opium product of India, which amounts annually to something like ten million pounds sterling.

They have some fifty large commercial houses in Bombay, fourteen in Calcutta, twenty in Hong Kong, ten in Shanghai, four in London, three in Amoy, one in Foo-Chow, one in Yokohama, and many throughout India, Persia, and Egypt.

The most eminent Parsee of modern times was Sir Jamseetjee Jeejeeboy, a merchant prince of India, who was made a baronet by the Queen of England and Empress of India, in recognition of his many acts of benevolence and charity.

He had given away something over £250,000 for the amelioration of the condition of his fellow-creatures.

His son succeeds to his title, and has a legacy of £10,000 per annum, safely invested in the British funds, to enable him to keep up the distinguished honor conferred upon the founder of his family, with suitable dignity.

A beautiful fountain has recently been erected in Regent's Park, London, by the munificence of Cowasjee Jehanger, a wealthy Parsee gentleman of Bombay.

It has been said that the Parsees were superstitious about extinguishing fire, but this is probably a mistake.

They are the only people in the world who do not smoke tobacco, or some other stimulating weed.

Their reverence for fire as a symbol of purity prevents them from dealing with it lightly. They would not play with fire, nor extinguish it unnecessarily; and generally welcome the evening blaze with a prayer of thankfulness.

Their religion forbids them to defile any of the creations of God, such as the earth, water, trees, flowers, &c.; and on no account would a Parsee indulge in the disgusting habit of expectoration.

They have been accustomed to the refinement of finger-bowls after meals, for several thousand years, and resort to ablutions frequently.

PANCHAYAT.

The secular affairs of the Parsees are managed by an elective committee, or "Panchayat," composed of twelve priests and six bishops, making a council of eighteen.

Its functions resemble the Jewish Sanhedrim or the Venetian Council of Ten, and its objects are to preserve unity, peace, and justice amongst the followers of Zoroaster.

One law of the Panchayat is singular in its difference from the law or custom of any other native community in Asia. It is this:

"That nobody who has a wife living shall marry another."

The strength of the authority of the "Panchayat" was severely tried in a recent case at Bombay.

A very rich and influential member of the society having committed bigamy, was cited to appear before the "Panchayat" to answer this violation of the law; and under threat of excommunication, not only to the offender, but to all

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who harbored or associated with him, the culprit surrendered himself to the judgment of the ancient tribunal of his faith.

The decree of the Panchayat was:

That he should deposit 2,000 rupees as security for the maintenance of his first wife, and restore to her all her maiden jewels; that he should appear in the presence of the "*Panchayat*" with sackcloth around his neck, and, holding his shoe in his hand, should beat himself five times over the face with the sole, in token of humility; and that he should undergo purification for forty days before he again appeared in society.

A sentence which the ladies will no doubt approve.

CASTE.

There are only two distinct castes among the Parsees,—the Priests and the People.

The priestly office is hereditary, and no one can become a Priest who was not born in the purple; but the son of a priest may become a layman.

PARSEE POETRY.

The Parsees have not been without members who aspired to woo the Muse of Poetry.

The loves of Joseph and Potiphar's wife (whom they call the beautiful Zuleika) seem to have formed a prolific theme for song.

They gave Joseph the credit of being the Adonis of the East, and frequently refer to him as the physical type of manly beauty in the age in which he lived.

The Poet Jami says:

"Zuleika, at night, impatient and distracted,
"the twin sister of affliction, to which sorrow
"was a familiar friend,—

"Drank to the very dregs the cup of wretch-
"edness, from the burning anguish of passion
"passed the night without repose."

The fair Zuleika does not seem to have been so cruel or indifferent to the fate of Joseph as his Israelitish brethren have taught us to believe.

She says:

"When a prison becomes the residence of "such a lovely rose, it loses the horrors of a "prison, and possesses the charms of spring.

"If in paradise we were not to behold the "face of the person we adore, paradise would "appear dreary to a lover's eye."

More charitable than Moses, and perhaps exercising a poetic license, the Parsee writers crown the passion of the fair Zuleika with happiness, and unite her in marriage to the virtuous Joseph who becomes King of Egypt.

The Parsee effusions are warm in praise of wine, women, and flowers; in fact, they are altogether too warm to repeat in the frigid atmosphere of America, where the blood is not warmed by the Persian sun.

The lover sings to his mistress:—

"O you with large eyes, bright and open as cups,

"You have two young citrons nestled on your breast;

"Your teeth are mother-of-pearl and your lips are honey;

" Your hair is like a fragrant bush, and spreads on your shoulders;
" The down on your face is like violets under a bed of roses;
" Your body is a garden with buds opening on your breast.
" Whoever comes to gather flowers, tell him they are mine.
" Thou art my nightingale and my shrub of roses.
" Red-skirted girl, thy forehead is like the moon.
" Should the nightingale behold thee, he would no longer woo the rose.
" O my beautiful girl, my beautiful girl, your hair is plaited in forty tresses.
" You wear a golden comb in your head and a silver buckle on your foot.
" You tie around your waist a shawl of a thousand colors.
" My soul, my dear, I die of the brand of love upon my heart.
" When a day passes without sight of thee, I ask the flying birds.

" Thou hast roasted me by the fire of thine eyes.

" I was a bird of freedom; but now I am tangled in thy net.

" O let the bloom of beauty remain on thy face for ever, and adorn it with everlasting graces.

" The rose of thy face has many black moles.

" He kisses them who has great riches; but I am poor.

" The lover must have gold, but I have not a grain of barley.

" I amuse myself about this wonderful ordination of God that wicked men should have such beautiful wives.

" I wish a sheaf of love arrows would strike your heart as the fire that spreads a gleam on the sea.

" Come, maiden, in token of our love, throw thy arms, painted with henna, around my neck.

" In the evening, if you do not call for me, I shall become a devil for the whole night."

The girl dutifully refers him to her mother.

" Thou wishest for a kiss.
" The kiss lies behind the lips.
" My mouth is locked;
" My mother has the key."

The following is a more familiar quotation:

" Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight,
" And bid these arms thy neck infold,
" That rosy cheek, that lily hand,
" Would give thy poet more delight
" Than all Bokhara's vaulted gold,
" Than all the gems of Samarcand."

An old man says:

" The snows of age descend upon my head,
" Yet from my gaiety of disposition I am young."

The heaviest curse in poetry is:

" May you milk forty cows,
" And have no buttermilk
" To quench your thirst."

SHIRAZ.

The valley of Shiraz, in the province of Farsistan, through which the bright waters of the Araxes find their way to the sea, is described as the paradise of the world.

(By the way, paradise is an old Persian word, and means a park, or beautiful garden.)

On the south of this valley the great range of mountains called the Hindu-Kush, dividing India from Persia, furnishes game for the hunter, and sustenance for flocks and herds.

On the mountains to the north a ruined "Temple of the Sun" bears melancholy evidence of the departed grandeur of the Parsee race. The base of this temple is 1,400 feet long, by 900 feet broad, and a hundred columns stand as sentinels upon the watch towers of time,—the ruined pillars of Chilmanar.

The statuary represents the mythology of a perished race, and the inscriptions defy the learning of to-day.

The poet says:

"The spider holds the veil in the Palace of Cæsar,
"The owl stands sentinel upon the watch towers of Afrasiab.

The natural rock was hewn down to form the platform upon which the "Temple of Fire" stood, and then faced around with masonry—the interior space or courtyard being 430 by 310 feet.

The stairway cut in the solid rock for ascending to the altar, is so regular and easy, that an army of horsemen could ride to its summit.

The entrance is guarded by sphynxes, forming portals to the sanctuary, and you pass through a ghostly avenue of statuary, representing goods, men, animals, and supernatural beings.

An inscription has been deciphered, which is translated as follows:

"Ormadz, who has created the earth, heaven,

"and men, made Xerxes king and ruler over "many.

"What Xerxes has done has been by the grace of Ormadz."

Zoroaster is represented here with his feet resting upon a star, and his head encircled with a glory.

An arch 160 feet high and 80 feet span, attests the architecture of the age.

"Where are the days, thou wondrous sphere,
"When Iran like a sunflower turned
"To meet that eye where'er it burned;
"When from the banks of Bendemeer
"To the nut groves of Samarcand,
"The temples flamed o'er all the land?
"Where are they? Ask the shades of them,
"Who on Cadessia's bloody plains
"Saw fierce invaders pluck the gem
"From Iran's broken diadem,
"And bind her ancient faith in chains."

The valley is loaded with the golden grain of a luxuriant harvest; it is bright with ferti-

lizing streams and the play of fountains. The atmosphere is cooled by refreshing showers and perfumed by the fragrance of flowers.

The highways are shaded by fruit trees, which furnish the traveler with the most luscious apples, peaches, grapes, figs, oranges, dates and pomegranates. The cedar-built cottages are the abodes of industry and happiness. The spinning-wheel sings under the busy hand of the Parsee maiden as the shining silk unwinds from the soft cocoon, and the treadle of the loom responds to the pressure of dainty feet as the silk-laden shuttle flies from side to side, coquetting with the rose-leaved fingers.

At eventide the turtle doves coo in the cypress groves, and the nightingale pours his liquid note of love into the ear of his blushing mistress the rose.

The black-eyed maids of Shiraz come out clad in gossamer silk (the work of their own hands), wound in mysterious folds around their polished limbs.

Their jewelled caps sit jauntily upon their

heads, and their necklaces of pearls rival the snowy bosoms upon which they rest.

Their black eyes, powdered with surmah, flash like fire-flies in the moonlight, and their henna-tipped fingers are as dainty as rose leaves.

They dance to the music of the lute, keeping time with the bells on their golden anklets; whilst the young Parsees make love with the intensity of the Children of the Sun, warm with the wine of Shiraz, and sing the song of Hafiz:

"Boys, let your liquid ruby flow,
"And bid your pensive hearts be glad:
"Whate'er the frowning zealots say,
"Tell them their Eden cannot show
"A stream so clear as Rocnabad,
"A bower so sweet as Mosselay."

CONCLUSION.

I hope that the extracts which have been given will convince you that the "Sun Worshippers of Asia" are worthy of a higher place in your estimation than mere idolaters; that

they are the followers of a pure and sublime religion which deserves respect for its great antiquity, and for the persecutions it has survived.

As Christians, we venerate the Cross as the emblem of a crucified Saviour, who mediated with his life as an atonement for sin.

The Parsees worship the sun as the brightest creation of God, as the emblem of His purity, as the mirror of His brightness, as the evidence of His omnipotence, as the majestic throne around which illimitable worlds revolve in their orbit, subject to His will.

THE RUINS OF PERSEPOLIS.

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Far eclipsing all other memorials of the past in Persia are the ruins of Persepolis, whose stately columns, massive propylæa, gigantic wardens, and cyclopean stages are as largely responsible for the lofty conceptions we entertain of Persia's early greatness and magnificence as the pompous periods and gorgeous pictures of her historians. "Not only youthful travelers, glowing with imagination," writes Vaux, "but those of sober judgment, matured by the experience of many years, seem, as they approach these venerable monuments, to be inspired with the genius of Eastern romance, and their res-

pective languages scarcely furnish epithets capable of expressing with an adequate energy the astonishment and admiration excited by such stupendous objects."

If before examining these antiquities we hastily trace a slight sketch of the ancient Persian Empire, we shall find that the same will be of service to us in enabling us to refer the different ruins and monuments to their proper place in history; and thus we shall proceed to our survey of these remarkable architectural remains with more interest, and with prospects of fuller instruction, from having first seen at what time, under what influence, and by what ancient kings they had their birth.

The early history of Persia, with true fidelity to the genius of development as exhibited by almost every nation, is embodied in the songs of her poets or in the tales of her fabulists. In the Rustem of her bards we find the Hercules of the Greeks and Romans; and in the long line of heroes and demigods of

her traditionists we discover an exact reflection of the storied mythologies of the classical writers.* It is not until we descend to the sixth century B.C. that we find ourselves free from the mist of antiquity, and treading on sure historic ground. The patient industry of the investigators of the cuneiform records of Assyria has, however, thrown a few rays of light through the obscurity of the two or three centuries preceding that date. We know now that as late as the ninth century B.C. the Persians were broken up into independent tribes, incapable of acting in concert, and thus offering an easy prey to the Assyrian kings, who overran the country and exacted tribute from the subjected chieftains.† With just this glimpse at the

* The great historical poem of Persia, called the "Shah Nameh," or "Book of Kings," written during the latter part of the tenth century A.D., by Firdusi, the "Homer of Persia," is a compilation of all the mythological, traditional, and historical mem orials of the Persian Empire, from the earliest times to the Mohammedan conquest, A.D. 636.

† Rawlinson's "Ancient Monarchies," vol. iii., p. 365.

condition of the primitive Persian tribes, we pass over three centuries to find them consolidated into a state or monarchy, and Pasargadæ, not far from the later capital, Persepolis, the abode of a Persian court. B.C. 588, the rising Persian power came in contact with the Median monarchy: Persia lost her king, and Media her kingdom. Cyrus the Great, son of the fallen Persian monarch, Cambyses, became the universal master of the Medes and Persians; and under his soldierly genius the vastest empire the world had yet seen arose upon the ruins of the Median and Babylonian monarchies; for scarcely had Media fallen, before the Babylonian power was broken into pieces, and her sceptre transferred to "Darius the Mede," to whom was delegated, by Cyrus, the government of Babylon. Thus were fulfilled the high purposes of heaven.

While leading an expedition against some Scythian tribe—probably the Massagetæ—Cyrus received the wound that in a few days termi-

nated his life.* He was buried at Pasargadæ, and there his tomb stands to-day, surrounded by the remains of the magnificent structures with which he beautified that city. And it is to this Cyrus, as we shall hereafter see, that we must ascribe some of the most interesting and important of the Persepolitan ruins.

It is not needful, for our purpose, that we follow in any way closely the succeeding brilliant periods of the empire. Under Cambyses, we see her leading her troops along the Upper Nile; and but a little later, under Xerxes, reviewing her fleets upon the shores of the Hellespont. The East for the first time presumes to measure her strength with the West. The insult is not forgotten. At the battle of the Issus, Alexander strikes the blow that at once

* Although we have accepted that version of the death of Cyrus which seems the most probable after a comparison of authorities, still we admit that there is a very great discrepancy upon this point among the early writers: "Herodotus and Justin, as well as Diodorus Siculus, state that he was taken prisoner and put to death by Tomyris, queen of the

avenges Greece and shatters the whole fabric of the Persian Empire. The battle of Arbela quickly succeeds; the gates of Babylon open to him of their own accord; Persepolis is scarcely taken before its splendid palaces are heaps of ruins; at Parsargadæ even the sanctity of the tomb is violated, and within the sepulchre, basely opened, Alexander reads this inscription: "O man, whoever thou art, and whencesoever thou comest, I am Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire; envy me not the little earth that covers my body." (Vaux's "Nineveh and Persepolis," p. 99.) And thus meet the founder and the destroyer of one of the most magnificent empires the world had ever seen.

Alexander soon afterward dies at Babylon. Persia for fifty years forms a portion of the

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Massagetæ. Ctesias says he was slain by the javelin of an Indian, while making war on the dervises of that country; but Xenophon informs us that he died in his bed, after delivering an edifying address to his two sons, and was buried at Pasargadæ, in the year B.C. 529."—Fraser's "Persia," chap. iii.

dominion of the Seleucidæ. Then the Parthians wrest the province from them, and for five hundred years maintain in Persia the Parthian monarchy. A.D. 266 the authority reverts to a line of native princes: the Sassanian dynasty is founded; and though the rule of these kings is at first vigorous, it gradually becomes weak and inefficient, and offers but feeble resistance to the impetuous outbreak of the tribes of Arabia. The conquest by the Arabs is followed by that of the Turks; and then again at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Persian line is restored, and the Saffanean dynasty established. To-day it is one of the weakest and most despicable governments on the face of the earth, and its conceited Shah-in-Shaw, or King of Kings, the puppet-show of Europe.

The antiquities to which we shall now direct our attention will be seen to belong entirely to the earliest and most brilliant period of Persia's history—to the reigns of Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes. And thus these monuments are in-

vested with all the interest of a hoary antiquity, scarcely yielding in this respect to the remains of Assyria and Babylonia.

The ruins of Persepolis, as they have come to be called, lie about forty miles in a northerly direction from Shiraz, on the eastern edge of the extensive plain of Merdasht. When we saw this plain, in early spring, portions were beautifully green with irrigated fields; but the larger part lay waste and barren, presenting a very different aspect from what it did when the Persian kings, from the elevated terraces of their palaces, overlooked one of the most beautiful and carefully kept valleys in the world. Low, gray, sunburnt hills, thrice as barren and forbidding as ever Virgil imagined the Ithacan rocks, hem in the plain on all sides, and instead of heightening by contrast, as formerly, the beauty of the emerald valley, now intensify its repulsive desolation.

The ruins, as we have already said, lie just at the foot of the hills that border the plain on the east. Although these remains are usually

spoken of as the "Ruins of Persepolis," they are not the remains of that capital—few traces of which are existing—but are the ruins of the great palaces, which were situated a considerable distance from the city. The entire group is called by the natives, "Chehl Minar" (forty columns), or "Tukhti Jemshid" (Jemshid's throne). Almost every thing of a wonderful nature in Persia is attributed by the natives to this fabulous character; just as Hercules among the Greeks and Romans, and Semiramis among the Babylonians, were the names about which gathered all the wonderful tales from every source; and just as Nimrod or Solomon with the Arabs to-day has the credit of every thing remarkable to be found in Assyria or Babylonia.

The first palace built at Persepolis was founded by Cyrus the Great; others were raised by succeeding kings, especially by Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes Ochus. The mass of buildings was destroyed, at least partially, upon the overthrow of the empire by the Macedonian; and, indeed, Alexander himself is said to have

fired the edifices during a "drunken frolic, and at the instigation of a courtesan."*

As at Baalbec, it is the massive substructions upon which the buildings stood that constitute one of the most imposing features of the remains. This immense platform is fifteen hundred feet in length, and nine hundred and thirty-six feet in width; as the ground slopes slightly from the hill toward the plain, the platform is supported by walls upon three sides only, the fourth abutting upon the hills that overhung the palace. The platform is composed of three terraces, the central being by far the longest and highest, presenting to the plain an imposing and massive front seven hundred and

* The name of Thaïs at least has as sure a place in history as that of Herostratus, the ambitious youth who thought to immortalize himself by firing the temple of Diana, at Ephesus. According to Plutarch, as quoted by Fraser, the palace, though greatly damaged by the fire kindled by Alexander, was in existence as late as the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. Some accounts attribute the final destruction of Persepolis and its palaces to the Moslem iconoclasts.

seventy feet in length, and over forty feet in height.

This gigantic platform is the most remarkable work of its nature in the world, far exceeding in its dimensions the famous substructions of the temple of the Sun at Baalbec. The Syrian platform, however, surpasses the Persepolitan in the size of the stones used in its construction. There are, however, blocks of sufficiently gigantic dimensions occurring in the supporting walls of the Persepolitan stage. We measured one, in the wall of the southern terrace, which gave a length of twenty-seven feet and a width of seven. The entire face of this block was covered with cuneiform inscriptions. There were many other stones near the one measured of nearly equally gigantic dimensions. These massive blocks give the walls a strength and solidity that insure to them a perpetuity as lasting as the surrounding hills. We have already, in connection with our description of the great palace-mound at Nineveh, alluded to the purposes subserved by the enormous mounds,

stages, terraces, or platforms, which we now find loaded with the *débris* of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian palaces. The fact that the Persepolitan platform that supported the Persian royal residences was constructed of stone, and has thus been able to preserve through so many centuries its prominent features, especially its wonderful stairways, unimpaired by the wear of time, is what adds greatly to the interest that attaches itself to this stupendous monument of the world's ancient builders.

The surface of the platform is reached from the front by means of a grand staircase over twenty feet in width, consisting of two flights of broad stone steps: each step is so low and wide that, encouraged by the assurance of worthy predecessors and the example of our guide, we mounted on horseback, and with such ease that it would be an exaggeration to call it any kind of a feat. Both Niebuhr and Fergusson unite in pronouncing this stairway the finest work of the kind that the ancient or even modern world can show. As if depend-

ing on its grand proportions for admiration, it is entirely free from sculptures or ornamentation of any kind; while the smaller staircases that lead from the northern and southern terraces to the central one, are most profusely decorated with sculptural designs and figures. The effect of the stern, stately simplicity which the broad sweep of steps imparts would be injured were the eye allowed to be led off in the survey of any thing subordinate and simply sculpturesque.

Ascending this stairway, we found ourselves upon the northern terrace, confronted by two colossal bulls, wardens of the ancient palace. In their gigantic dimensions they seem to belong to Egypt,* but in conception and execution

* That Persian art felt the influence of Egyptian, scarcely admits of doubt. Nebuchadnezzar spoiled Egypt, and one-fourth century after, Cyrus sacked Babylon. Cambyses rifled the hundred-gated Thebes, and bore away many trophies into Persia. Through these mediate and direct contacts with the Egyptians, the Persian artists must have received many suggestions which had much to do in giving character to Persepolitan architecture.

to Assyria. These colossal figures flanked an imposing propylæum, twelve feet wide and over thirty high. About one hundred feet from the first gateway is a second of equal dimensions, likewise flanked by two bulls looking toward the hills. These differ from those facing the plain in being represented with wings and the human face divine. These grand propylæa formed the appropriate portals to a magnificent hall, of which only two stately fluted pillars, sixty feet high, ornamented with curious and elaborate capitals, that constitute a considerable portion of the height of the column, are left to enable us to judge of the nature of the structure. The excessively elongated capital forms one of the most peculiar features of the architecture of the Achæmean kings. "It may have contented them," writes Loftus, "to borrow indiscriminatively from all [nations], so that each of the hundred columns surrounding their throne might bear upon its fluted shaft the lotus, the palm, and the bull, and symbolize the glories which the victorious arms of the Persians had

gathered upon the battle-fields of Egypt, Assyria, Greece and Babylonia."

But although, save the pillars mentioned, the hall to which the propylæa gave entrance has almost entirely disappeared, and time has swept away the greater portion of the palaces themselves, whose last master passed out through these portals more than twenty centuries ago, and has thrown down the architrave of the propylæa, and left many a defacing mark on the giant wardens themselves, yet, time-worn and scarred, they still sentinel the surrounding desolation, and, if spared from iconoclastic hands, will be for many centuries to come the worthy guardians of the ruins of the palaces of the Persian kings.

It is a somewhat ludicrous anachronism to find these ancient propylæa and bulls, besides bearing cuneiform inscriptions, covered all over with English initials. By and by, after the English has become a dead language, some curious antiquarian will have a real time determining whether it were Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes, or

Rich, Malcolm, and MacDonnald who set up these winged bulls. Perhaps Stanley, too, in those distant times, will be honored, not only as the discoverer of Livingstone, but also as founder of the Persepolitan palace: "STANLEY, NEW YORK HERALD," being engraved between the legs of one of the colossal bulls in letters as bold as the Ujiji expedition.

Besides the propylæa and the ruined hall to which they led, there are no remains of importance on the northern terrace. So, these examined, we ascend the stairway that leads to the great central terrace which supports the grandest fragments of buildings that are found on the platform. This staircase is elaborately ornamented with sculptures, representing triumphal processions, where conqueror and captive, crowned king and long-robed priest, warriors armed with lance and shield, bow and quiver, and chariots drawn by led horses, march along in stone with us to the "Hall of Xerxes," the audience-chamber, or throne-room, of the Great King. Thirteen lofty columns, that rise

up grandly to a height of sixty feet, are the principal remains of the magnificent pillared hall, the grandest and most stately audience-chamber that Eastern monarch ever sat beneath to hear and judge the matters of his subjects.

The bases of many of the columns that have fallen are still in place, and thus antiquarians have been able to restore at least the prominent features of the edifice. The hall proper consisted of a group of thirty-six columns, each rising to the great height of sixty-four feet. Three pillared porticoes inclosed this central group on three sides, at a distance of seventy feet, thus making the dimensions of the structure 350 feet in length and 246 feet in breadth. The main cluster of pillars, like each of the porticoes, supported a roof. Fergusson thinks that the edifice was still further protected by walls of inferior construction, which time may have removed. But Rawlinson supposes the structure to have been a "summer throne-room, open to all the winds of heaven, except so far as it was protected by curtains."

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Besides this hall of Xerxes, there was another of similar construction standing upon the same terrace, and called the "Hall of a Hundred Columns." It consisted of a square of one hundred pillars, fronted by a deep portico. Every column has been thrown down, but massive doorways and monolithic window-frames of black polished marble render it easy to trace the lines of the inclosing walls; for, unlike the hall of Xerxes, the phalanx of pillars was here surrounded by thick walls. This structure, though it must have been sufficiently magnificent, was never so imposing as the lofty audience-hall of Xerxes, as the columns of the central cluster and porch were only a trifle over half the height of those of that stately edifice. It was doubtless used by the earlier Persian kings for the same purposes for which the later monarchs employed the hall of Xerxes.

The originality of conception and boldness of execution displayed by the Persian architect in these stately "halls of audience," will have been remarked. There is nothing in the architecture

of any other people with which we may compare them, unless we except the audience-halls of the great Mogul sovereigns of India. But the one that formed an adjunct of the palace at Delhi, while beautiful and sumptous as to its ornamentation, in stern grandeur and bold stateliness falls far behind the Persepolitan edifices. Considering the early age in which they had their birth, they cannot fail to excite alike our astonishment and admiration.

From a description of these public structures we now pass to the residences of the Persian kings. There are the remains of four palatial edifices lying upon the platform. These have been identified as the royal residences of Cyrus or Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes Ochus. The remains of the first are scanty, as much of the material was used in the construction of the later palaces. There are, however, enough blocks left to render it possible to trace a hall and portico that indicate a structure small in dimensions compared with the palaces of the last two sovereigns. The ruins

of the Palace of Darius lie near those of the great audience-hall already described. These remains consist principally of massive portals and windows; the jambs of the door-ways and the entire window-frames being monolithic.* The jambs of the doors are adorned with sculptures, a tiresome repetition being maintained: the constantly recurring figures are those of the king, accompanied by two attendants, one holding a sun-shade, and the other a brush for driving away flies—from which we may infer what were some of the annoyances of life in a Persian palace; or the royal personage is represented as engaged in combat with a horned monster, which he seizes by the horn with his

* This is simply another instance of the direction taken by the pride or ambition, rather than the taste, of the ancient builders of the world. It was the style to cut and place gigantic blocks of stone because they witnessed to the power and resources of the sovereign. It was this pride which raised the vast obelisks of Egypt, that hoisted to their places the huge blocks that form the substructions at Baalbec, that cut and polished the Persepolitan monoliths.

left hand, while with his right he plunges a dagger into the body of the rampant beast This figure is thought by Ravenshaw to be entirely symbolical, "indicating the sun passing through or conquering the signs of the zodiac." In confirmation of this view he quotes Dupuis to the effect that "the twelve labors of Hercules were in like manner myths, founded on the annual labors of the sun."* The remains of the Palace of Xerxes repeat the features of the preceding one; while the royal residence of Artaxerxes Ochus is represented by scanty fragments of walls and columns.

As in the case of the Assyrian palaces, there is a diversity of opinion as to the existence of a second story in the Persepolitan royal residences. Fergusson, who always seems to be inclined toward the side of grandeur, supports, without much apparent evidence, the theory that would give the palaces all the imposing effect

* "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society," vol. xvi, art. vii, p. 109.

to be gained by a second story; but Rawlinson rejects this view, as no staircases nor other evidences of such a plan of construction have been discovered. The buildings, if but one-storied, must have presented a somewhat low and massive appearance, which would, however, be in part counteracted by their commanding position upon the terraces. The chambers and different apartments, we may infer, had the gloom consequent upon such a massive style of construction, relieved by all those sumptuous decorations and luxurious arrangements that are the invariable adjuncts of royal residences in the East.

The gradual growth of the successive Persepolitan palaces has been remarked by different writers. From the comparatively small structure which we may without much hesitation attribute to Cyrus the Great, we advance to the extensive palace of Artaxerxes Ochus, which equaled in size the famous palace of the Assyrian Sargon. But we think that Rawlinson is the first to call attention to the change that may be

observed in the tone of the ornamentation of the earlier and later palaces. The sculptures that adorn the residences of the first kings, Cyrus and Darius, represent the royal person engaged in bold and manly combat with lions or other monsters; while in the halls and chambers of the palace of Xerxes we see that these give place to representations of servants bearing articles of luxury intended for royal use. "A tone of mere sensual enjoyment is thus given to the later edifice which is very far from characterizing the earlier; and the decline at the court, which history indicates as rapid about this period, is seen to have stamped itself, as such changes usually do, upon the national architecture."*

At Persepolis "it is but a step from the palace to the tomb." Directly back of the ruins, in the face of the rock that overhangs the great platform, is an artificial recess, sunk just deep enough to protect a beautiful richly sculp-

* Rawlinson's "Ancient Monarchies," vol. iii., p. 293.

tured façade. The elaborately carved rock recalls the sculpturesque fronts of Petra. This is one of the famous rock-tombs of the Persian kings. Prominent among the multitude of figures that adorn the tomb is a robed personage, doubtless intended to represent the sovereign himself, in the position of adoration before a fire-altar and a globe, symbolizing the sun, the chief object emblematic of the deity worshiped by these Magian kings.* Thus here, as is always the case, religion and the sepulchre are intimately connected. A low door, toward the base of the façade, gives entrance to a small vaulted chamber, containing niches for the reception of the bodies. There are seven of

* Zoroasterism, or the worship of fire, is simply a corruption of the earlier Chaldæan Sabianism—the adoration of the "hosts of heaven." The Ghebers and Parsees of the present day still hold the doctrines and customs of their ancestors with little change. They worship the element fire only as the most perfect type or symbol or the Supreme Deity. They esteem it irreverent to extinguish a flame. We once asked a Parsee if when a candle or lamp was lighted it must be allowed to burn till it consumed itself? "No," said he, "for though it may not be extinguished, still the tip of the candle or wick may be cut

these rock-hewn tombs in the face of the hills about Persepolis; but only one has any inscription, and that has been identified as the sepulchre of Darius Hystaspis.

Nearly two miles north of the group of ruins we have been describing, a broad valley leads the inconsiderable stream of the Pulwar through the hills that form the eastern border of the plain of Merdasht. Just at the opening of this valley stood the capital of the later Persian Empire—Istakr, as known in the language of the country, but which, through the Greeks, has passed into history under the name of Persepolis, or "City of the Persians." The ruins

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off and"—"Thrown into the fire," suggested we. "No," continued he, "placed *carefully* in the fire." Yet their practical view of things sometimes gets the better of their veneration, as when the "fiend" is consuming their property. In India they have been known to work energetically in extinguishing conflagrations. Great numbers of the Ghebers have been driven by Moslem persecution into India, where they are known as Parsees. We found some in the Vale of Cashmere. More than the Japanese, they merit the distinction of being called the "Yankees of Asia." They appear more like Europeans than Asiatics; are enterprising, intelligent and progressive.

we have already examined may be considered as the relics of the royal suburb of the capital. The remains marking the site of the city proper are scanty and unimportant compared with those that cover the great stage. Of the palace that stood within the city nothing remains save a solitary column and some fragments of walls and massive doorways which preserve the ancient site.

The most interesting ruin here, however, is a heap of enormous blocks, that is supposed by some to mark the position of one of the city gates, but which Rawlinson suggests may be the remains of a "fortified gate," similar to the Pylæ Ciliciæ, or the Pylæ Syriæ, described by Xenophon in the Anabasis—intended to close the valley against the passage of a hostile army. We do not know that we have any authority for saying, yet we suppose that the ancient custom of fortifying with walls and heavy gates narrow valleys that formed the natural pathway through mountainous countries, is what leads us often to speak of difficult passes as "mountain gates."

In the face of the rocks that form the northern wall of the Pulwar valley, are four tombs, similar to the one above the great palace platform. Beneath those royal sepulchres are numerous tablets of a comparatively recent date, most of which are the work of the Assacidan (Parthian) and Sassanian kings, who ruled Persia during the first centuries of our era. We shall not attempt to give any description of these sculptures, as they are very similar to the rock-tablets of Shapur, of which we have given a brief account in another chapter.

Standing near the base of the cliffs that contain these tablets is a solitary tower, about twenty feet square and thirty or forty feet in height, solidly constructed of immense stones. A doorway fifteen feet above the ground gives access to a single lofty chamber, roofed by massive marble beams, six feet in width and twenty-four in length. In external appearance the structure resembles the tower-tombs of Palmyra, save in the cyclopean nature of its masonry. Morier believes it to be a fire-temple, or

more properly, a fire-altar, of the earlier Magians.

We have now glanced at the most important of the Persepolitan remains. We have not attempted a minute delineation of the various ruins, but have simply aimed to give a general yet accurate description of their most prominent and interesting features. These ruins give us almost all the knowledge we possess respecting the architecture of the ancient Persians. The remains at Pasargadæ,* the capital of the earlier kings, and also those at Susa, on the Susianian plains, are insignificant compared with those that mark the site of the Persepolitan palaces.

Keppel, in speaking of the Turks, observes that a people who never look back to their ancestors will never look forward to their pos-

* The tomb of Cyrus the Great, which stands at Pasargadæ, is the most interesting structure existing on that ancient site. For full descriptions of this tomb, and the other remains at Pasargadæ and Susa, see Loftus, "Chaldæ and Susiana;" Rawlinson, "Ancient Monarchies;" and Ker Porter, "Travels."

terity. Persia to-day witnesses the truth of this reflection. She has no care, nor even curiosity, respecting the memorials of her former grandeur; and probably there is no nation in this broad world more forgetful of the claims of posterity. But fortunately the monuments of her golden days are of such a nature that they find protection in their own cyclopean strength. As long as the monuments of Egypt overlook the Nile, so long will the giant wardens of the Persian palaces look out over the plains of Iran, and tell to wondering centuries the story of the magnificence that they witnessed so long ago.

Par'-sees [*per. pârsi*] is the name generally given to the modern followers of Zoroaster. When, in 651 A. D., the last of the Sassanides, Yezdezird, was defeated by the caliph Omar in the battle of Nahavand, and Persia was conquered and subjugated by the Arabs, the whole population was converted to Islam. Only a small number of the Persians continued to cling to the national faith, and these were subjected to severe persecutions. The Mohammedans called them *Guebres*, "infidels," and allowed them to settle only in the poorest districts of the country, around Yezd and Kirmân. Most of them, however, emigrated to the Western coast of India, and settled at Bombay, Surat, Nawsario, Ahmedabad, etc. Those remaining in Persia were hard pressed; they decreased in numbers, and sank into poverty. At present they number only about 7,000, but they are much respected by the Europeans, on account of their honesty and reliability. Those, on the contrary, who went to India, prospered much, though at one time they too were exposed to persecutions by the Mohammedans. They are said to number at present from 150,000 to 200,000, and many of the wealthiest merchants of Bombay belong to their denomination. In India, however, their religion became mixed up with Hindoo ideas and practices, which at present has occasioned a schism, and the establishment of a reform association. Their morals underwent less change; they are still highly respected and feel well-disposed towards European civilization. (For their doctrines and tenets, see the articles "Zend-Avesta," and "Zoroaster.")—*Johnson's New Universal Cyclopædia.*

Zoroa'ster [the corrupt Greek and Latin version of the old Persian name *Zarathustra*, which the later Persians altered to *Zerdusht*], the founder of the ancient Persian religion. His fam-

ily name was *Spitama*, and *Zarathustra* seems to have been a title, meaning "chief," "senior," or "high priest." He was born in Bactria; his father's name was Pourushaspa, and he had a daughter by the name of Pouruchista. But this is all that is known of his personal life. What the old Persian or Greek authors tell about him is mere myth; even the time in which he lived is utterly uncertain, some placing it at 500 years before Christ, others, 6,000 years before Plato. The religious system which he developed is a complete dualism, Ormuzd being the creator and ruler of all that is bright and good, Ahriman the chief of that which is dark and evil. To each of these Supreme beings belongs a number of subordinate spirits; Ameshaspentas to Ormuzd, Devas to Ahriman; and all that exists is divided between these two realms. Man has to choose, and according to his choice, he will, after death, go to Ormuzd or Ahriman; the way to the first is pure thought, pure speech, and pure actions. The only object of worship was fire, the symbol of that which is bright and good, and to fire all temples and altars were dedicated. The priests who maintained the fire and conducted the worship, were the Magi. The developments which this system underwent from the time of Zoroaster up to our days are as yet points of contention. The monotheism which is now taught among the Parsees, and according to which Ormuzd and Ahriman are two principles only, not two causes, is by some scholars considered as the original idea of the religion of Zoroaster, while by others it is thought to be a later development.—*Johnson's New Universal Cyclopædia.*

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